

INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

1122 SPRING GARDEN STREET • PHILADELPHIA 23, PENNSYLVANIA

August 13, 1960

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Stanford University
Genetics Dept.
Palo Alto, Calif.

Dear Josh:

Sorry to delay a reply to your letters of July 29 and Aug. 1, but these last two weeks have really been something. We put out the second issue of INDEX CHEMICS. We were short help on CURRENT CONTENTS as a result of vacations and finally I took my pre-lims at the Penn. Linguistics Dept. This was a written exam which they gave me five days to answer. I suppose if they gave me ten I would have used it too. In any event after thirty five pages of answers I am glad to report that I passed. One thing that might interest you--in discussing "analogic change" in language I told them that scientific terminology was one of the best study areas available because it provides experimental data comparable to the study of drosophila in genetics. In other words scientific language changes rapidly enough in one or two generations so that you can study the process of language change(historical linguistics) without resorting to clay tablets and the like!!

I don't know if I told you, but I tried to sell the Air Force on the citation index for exactly the reason given in your letter of July 29th--as a means of tracing where their grant money and contract money had an impact. If I have your okay I will send a copy of your letter of the 29th to Dr. Wilson. Or if you prefer I will raise the question the next time I am in touch with her. Dr. Wilson's name brings me quite logically to a discussion of the business of a non-profit organization. When I sent her a copy of my letter to my lawyer(Mr. Vought) I had a phone call from her almost immediately in which she said that such a development(National Doc. Center) would have an important impact at NIH although she wouldn't say how much. I suppose it would make it easier for her to give out the money if this were the case(i.e. non-profit). I also learned that our proposal has been assigned to the Genetics Study Section which is good because all the members are now familiar with the idea.

I myself do not like the non-profit angle. If we can get the grant without it then I am in favor of doing it that way. It would save any confrontation with the problem of "conflict of interest". This question is different than the one you raise about adopting the name "National Documentation Center". I think that the comment I got from Chauncey Leake is worth quoting. "I see no reason why you should be upset about taking the name of NDC"" This is what you are doing, and hold to it until someone takes the title away from you, and the only one who can do that is the government of our country. Hang on to the Institute for Scientific Information"

The only people I have encountered who have an aversion to the titles we have chosen are those people who feel that we have pre-empted something that is peculiarly theirs--this seems to match with the dictionary definition of jealousy--the people who benefit from what we do, take daily advantage

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of our services--couldn't care less. You would be amazed, however, how many doors our new name has opened for us. There certainly is something in a name!! I have never seen anything like it. Just as you said, the aversion to profit making organizations is not so well based on sound logic that there is much point in trying to reason with it. However, those people who are rather illogically opposed to free enterprise find it easier to swallow when there is a candy coating. In this case the name works magic. In dealing with people abroad it has an extra magic because they have no way of really knowing the difference. I wonder if the head of the All-Union Inst. for Scientific Information in Moscow knew we were profitmaking when he invited me to speak there. Perhaps in his case that would only add to the attraction. Khrushchev seemed more interested in IBM than in the US government!!

However, I am still open to suggestion on other useful names. I don't know what the laws in Pennsylvania are regarding the incorporation of non-profit organizations but if we decide to go ahead with this then I hope that you will be a member of the board of directors. I think it will have to be up to the board of directors to decide what represents a conflict of interest on my part. Somebody has got to publish the SCI. Either the NDC can do it on its own or it can farm the job out to someone--either ISI or someone else. If we could get it done cheaper elsewhere I would see no reason why not. I would hope that we would do the job most efficiently. ISI would remain as a publisher if ~~that is~~ the board of NDC decided that a private firm would be better off publishing the SCI. Reinhold Publishing Company does an awful lot for the Am. Chem. Soc. In fact, I recently made an offer to the Director of Chem. Abstracts to help him catch up on his backlog on a contract basis.

My plans for ISI include floating a stock issue--the way things are going now we really don't need the capital as we have received so much money in advance on the INDEX CHEMICUS we need a financial adviser to tell us what to do with it. For the time being I am putting it in savings accounts. However, when we have spent a lot of money servicing the INDEX CHEMICUS we may need more capital to expand it, etc. In addition, we are now running out of space and will have to move again in the late fall or winter. There are now fifteen full time employees and about the same part-time!! I also thought a stock issue based on a profit would be good public relations. We are also definitely going ahead with a physical sciences edition of CC. In fact, I'm going to L.A. Wednesday, on my way to Mexico City for a vacation, to discuss buying up a small publication which has been doing a rather inadequate job of covering the space sciences. We will go ahead whether they agree or not, but it will be a good start to have their 800 circulation if we can swing them all over to the new, and more expensive edition. They cover 110 journals and we will cover 400 or so. If other companies are a lesson to us--we will undoubtedly need more capital as we prosper. That is why I mentioned the problem of the SCI in connection with ISI. Perhaps we could convince stockholders, on the basis of our other performances that the SCI would become profitable, and therefore it could get along without government subsidy. I think you can see that I am of two minds on this whole question and sometimes find it difficult to decide what is best for the SCI, for me, and all others concerned.

In closing let me say that I found out that ITEK corp. which has NSF contract to study various indexing systems is going to include Citation Indexes. I told them however that their data would not be valid unless they covered the literature comprehensively--we could give them pertinent citations from our project--if we get the grants. Let's hope this helps. So long.

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How did you make out with Turkey?

Gene Cartfield